Numb. CLV.

The GUARDIAN.

——libelli Stoici inter ſericos
Jacere pulvillos amant. Hor.

Tueſday, September 8. 1713.

I Have often wonderd that Learning is not thought a proper Ingredient in the Education of a Woman of Quality or Fortune. Since they have the ſame improveable Minds as the Male part of the Species, why ſhould they not be cultivated by the ſame Methods? why ſhould Reaſon be left to it ſelf in one of the Sexes, and be diſciplined with ſo much Care in the other?

There are ſome Reaſons why Learning ſeems more adapted to the Female World, than to the Male. As in the firſt place, becauſe they have more ſpare Time upon their Hands, and lead a more Sedentary Life. Their Employments are of a Domeſtick Nature, and not like thoſe of the other Sex, which are often inconſiſtent with Study and Contemplation. The Excellent Lady, the Lady *Lizard*, in the ſpace of one Summer furniſhed a Gallery with Chairs and Couches of her own and her Daughters working; and at the ſame time heard all Doctor *Tillotſon*'s Sermons twice over. It is always the Cuſtom for one of the young Ladies to read, while the others are at work; ſo that the Learning of the Family is not at all prejudicial to its Manufactures. I was mightily pleaſed, the other Day, to find them all buſie in *preſerving* ſeveral Fruits of the Seaſon, with the *Sparker* in the midſt of them, reading over *the Plurality of Worlds*. It was very entertaining to me to ſee them dividing their Speculations between Jellies and Stars, and making a ſudden Tranſition from the Sun to an Apricot, or from the Copernican Syſtem to the figure of a Cheeſe-cake.

A ſecond Reaſon why Women ſhould apply themſelves to uſeful Knowledge rather than Men, is becauſe they have that natural Gift of *Speech* in greater Perfection. Since they have ſo excellent a Talent, ſuch a *Copia Verborum*, or plenty of Words, 'tis Pity they ſhould not put it to ſome Uſe. If the Female Tongue will be in Motion, why ſhould it not be ſet to go right? Could they diſcourſe about the Spots in the Sun, it might divert them from publiſhing the Faults of their Neighbours: Could they talk of the different Aſpects and Conjunctions of the Planets, they need not be at the Pains to comment upon Ogles and Clandeſtine Marriages. In ſhort, were they furniſhed with Matters of Fact, out of Arts and Sciences, it would now and then be of great Eaſe to their Invention.

There is another Reaſon why thoſe eſpecially who are Women of Quality, ſhould apply themſelves to Letters: namely, becauſe their Husbands are generally Strangers to them.